Street Drugs 101

SKCCH
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(from a public health/harm reduction perspective)

Kris Nyrop
Public Defender Association
knyrop@defender.org
"An alcoholic is someone you don't like who drinks more than you do."

Dylan Thomas
Drug Addict:
n. someone you don’t like that does a different drug than you do.

(The most sociologically meaningful definition, and most of what we think about addiction is sociological, not pharmacological.)
Categories of Drugs (families)

- Narcotics/Opiates
- Depressants
- Stimulants
- Cannabis
- Hallucinogens
- Anabolic Steroids
- Inhalants
- (and alcohol, tobacco, etc., of course...duh)
What we care about

• Opiates
• Stimulants
• Depressants (benzos and alcohol)
Opiates

- Heroin
- Morphine
- Hydrocodone (Vicodin, Lorcet)
- Hydromorphone (Dilaudid)
- Oxycodone (Percodan, Percoset, Oxycontin)
- Oxymorphone (Opana)
- Methadone and LAAM
- Fentanyl and analogs
- Other narcotics (codeine)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drugs</th>
<th>CSA Schedules</th>
<th>Trade or Other Names</th>
<th>Medical Uses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Narcotics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heroin</td>
<td>Substance I</td>
<td>Diamorphine, Horse, Smack, Black tar, Chiva, Negra (black tar)</td>
<td>None in U.S., Analgesic, Antitussive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Morphine</td>
<td>Substance II</td>
<td>MS-Contin, Roxanol, Oramorph SR, MSIR</td>
<td>Analgesic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hydrocodone</td>
<td>Substance II, Product III, V</td>
<td>Hydrocodone w/ Acetaminophen, Vicodin, Vicoprofen, Tussionex, Lortab</td>
<td>Analgesic, Antitussive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hydro-morphine</td>
<td>Substance II</td>
<td>Dilaudid</td>
<td>Analgesic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxycodone</td>
<td>Substance II</td>
<td>Roxicet, Oxycodone w/ Acetaminophen, OxyContin, Endocet, Percocet, Percodan</td>
<td>Analgesic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance</td>
<td>Formulations</td>
<td>Uses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Codeine</td>
<td>Substance II, Products III, V</td>
<td>Analgesic, Antitussive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Narcotics</td>
<td>Substance II, III, IV</td>
<td>Fentanyl, Demerol, Methadone, Darvon, Stadol, Talwin, Paregoric, Buprenex</td>
<td>Analgesic, Antidiarrheal, Antitussive</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Stimulants

- Cocaine
- Amphetamine/Methamphetamine (Adderall)
- Methylphenidate (ritalin)
- Other stimulants
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stimulants</th>
<th>Substance II</th>
<th>Coke, Flake, Snow, Crack, Coca, Blanca, Perico, Nieve, Soda</th>
<th>Local anesthetic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cocaine</td>
<td>Substance II</td>
<td>Crank, Ice, Cristal, Krystal Meth, Speed, Adderall, Dexedrine, Desoxyn</td>
<td>Attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, narcolepsy, weight control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amphetamine/Meth-amphetamine</td>
<td>Substance II</td>
<td>Ritalin (Illy's), Concerta, Focalin, Metadate</td>
<td>Attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methylphenidate</td>
<td>Substance II</td>
<td>Adipex P, Ionamin, Prelu-2, Didrex, Provigil</td>
<td>Vaso-constriction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Stimulants</td>
<td>Substance III, IV</td>
<td>Adipex P, Ionamin, Prelu-2, Didrex, Provigil</td>
<td>Vaso-constriction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Depressants</strong></td>
<td><strong>Substance</strong></td>
<td><strong>Effects</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>gamma Hydroxybutyric Acid</td>
<td>Substance I, Product III</td>
<td>GHB, Liquid Ecstasy, Liquid X, Sodium Oxybiate, Xyrem®</td>
<td>None in U.S., Anesthetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benzodiazepines</td>
<td>Substance IV</td>
<td>Valium, Xanax, Halcion, Ativan, Restoril, Rohypnol (Roofies, R-2), Klonopin</td>
<td>Antianxiety, Sedative, Anti-convulsant, Hypnotic, Muscle Relaxant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Depressants</td>
<td>Substance I, II, III, IV</td>
<td>Ambien, Sonata, Meprobamate, Chloral Hydrate, Barbiturates, Methaqualone (Quaalude)</td>
<td>Antianxiety, Sedative, Hypnotic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Medical uses

- Narcotics/Opiates:
  - Analgesic (pain killer)
  - Antitussive (cough suppressor)
  - Anesthetic
  - Antidiarrheal (plugs ya right up)
  - Drug treatment

- Stimulants:
  - Local anesthetic
  - Attention deficit/hyperactivity
  - Narcolepsy
  - Weight control
Other effects

- **Narcotics/Opiates:**
  - Euphoria
  - Drowsiness
  - Calmness
  - Pain relief
  - Anxiety eliminator
  - Full body orgasm
  - Hunger relief
  - *Respiratory depression*

- **Stimulants:**
  - Increased alertness
  - Excitation
  - Euphoria
  - Insomnia
  - Loss of appetite
  - Increased sexual desire/performance (yeah-ah!)
What we’re really talking about

- **Narcotics/Opiates:**
  - Heroin (Mexican black tar, chiva)
  - Pills

- **Stimulants:**
  - Methamphetamine (crystal, crank, speed, Tina)
  - Cocaine (both flake/powder and crack)
Modes/routes of administration

- **Heroin/Opiates:**
  - Injection
  - Snorting (for heroin, not bloody likely in western US)
  - Smoking
  - Oral (well, for pills)

- **Stimulants:**
  - Injection (meth, flake, and crack [really])
  - Snorting (meth and flake)
  - Smoking (crack, meth [and no, there is no “special” smokeable form of meth])
  - Oral
Some behavioral differences

- **Heroin:**
  - Honey put on “A Love Supreme”…
  - Let’s listen to The Cowboy Junkies…
  - Sure is nice and cozy in this tent under the interstate.
  - Wanna do a crossword?

- **Stimulants:**
  - Let’s dance!!
  - Wanna do the horizontal hokey pokey (heh heh)?
  - Hey, I know, let’s gut that empty building and sell the copper…
  - More sex?
Chilly Clay:

• Sex is crystal
• Crystal is sex
Behavioral surveys (stereotype alert!)

• There are differences in meth use.
• Among some gay/bi men the sex=crystal equation holds.
• For straight men, sex is good, but so is welding and truck driving.
• For women, sex is good, but so is keeping it all together.
Cocaine/crack

• Heightened sex drive among both men and women.
• Trading sex for cocaine is absolutely given (even among middle/upper class users).
• Sucking the devil’s dick.
• Crack Pipe as Pimp.
• Glasgow.
Heroin/opiates

• Reduced sex drive among both men and women.
• Male inability to gain/maintain erection or achieve ejaculation.
• Trading sex for drugs common in women.
Injection differences

- Tar is hard to split.
- Backloading very common (thus much higher rates of Hep C).
- Heat inactivates HIV at low temps.
- Meth/flake easy to split (powder).
- Backloading much less common.
- No/little need to heat (even with crack).
Tar Heroin
Flake/powder cocaine
Crack
Crystal methamphetamine
Frequency of Use

• **Heroin:**
  - Overwhelming majority of heroin users are daily users.
  - Depending of habit size and purity, may inject 2 to 5 x per day.
  - Three is average.

• **Pills;** depends on drug, dose and route of use.
Frequency of Use cont’d

- **Stimulants:**
- **Big diffs:**
- Cocaine injectors shoot up a lot: 20 x per day not uncommon, but very few folks can handle this for much more than a day or two at a time.
- Many meth injectors are not daily injectors -- if so just 2x day.
Frequency of Use cont’d

• **Stimulants:**
  - Cocaine snorters and smokers will also do a lot…the high is just very short (maybe 10 minutes with crack, more likely 5).
  - Meth snorters and smokers will do less (tend to see a lot of weekend warriors).
Editorial Alert

• Pareto principle (the 80/20 rule): “for any given activity, 20% of the participants typically account for 80% of the action”.
• Vast majority of what most people think they know about drugs is wrong.
• Especially true of media.
Editorial Alert

• Most users of addictive drugs are not addicts (exception: tobacco?).
• Vast majority of heroin and cocaine use (80%) accounted for by relatively few (20%).
• Rats and cocaine; Harlem v. penthouse.
• Dr. Carl Hart, *The High Price*
Injection issues

- **Heroin:**
- Because of the frequency of injection and the prevalence of backloading, access to sterile injection equipment is essential.
- For example: there are an estimated 15,000 IDU in King County.
- If we assume that 75% are heroin injectors, then 11,250 heroin injectors.
Injection issues cont’d

• 11,250 injectors x 3 injections per day x 300 days per year = 10,125,000 syringes per year.
• This is 6-7 million more syringes per year than the local syringe exchanges have averaged over the last decade.
• About 1/3 of what the entire US exchanged in 2012.
Behavioral issues

• There is a strong association between stimulant use and sex.
• Stimulant use tends to promote feelings of invulnerability and seriously impair judgment.
• Serious alcohol use is not uncommon among stimulant users, further impairing judgment and decision-making.
• So syringe access may not be the most important factor for this population.
• The same is true for female heroin users who engage in commercial sex work.
Recent(ish) trends

- Opioid use around the US steadily increasing over last several yrs.
- Heroin is a big story locally and nationally.
- Vermont gov, Suffolk County, Appalachia, here.
- Little doubt that a great deal of this represents shifting from pills to heroin.
Recent(ish) trends

• But also true that a lot more heroin is coming in.

• Mexican cartels: major inroads on the east coast. S. American heroin > 50 %, but Mexican = 45%...way higher.
1977 - 2012

Source: Heroin Signature Program
Chart 5. US Heroin Seizures
2009 - 2013

Source: National...
Recent(ish) trends

• Price ↓, purity ↑, drug seizures ↑↑
• This is also true for cocaine and methamphetamine.
• Really calls into question supply-side, interdiction based drug policy.
Recent(ish) trends

- ↑In heroin/opioid use, ↑in purity, has also meant a ↑in overdose.
- OD has been an issue for a long time.
- Really gained traction >2000.
- Narcan/naloxone and good Samaritan laws.
Recent(ish) trends

- New Mexico led way; CRA; DOPE, Project Lazarus.
- Now police all over.
- \( \approx 600 \) people in WA died from opioid OD in 2013.
- 6,668 died 2002-13.
Recent(ish) trends

- New changes to WA law.
- Doctors can now write RX to agencies to distribute naloxone.
- Any agency that serves folks who may be using opiates, should get naloxone for themselves and their clients/participants.
Drug Purity

Drug Strength/Quality

Purity (% Drug)

% Adulterant (cut)

- 25%
- 50%
- 85%

- 25% 50% 85%

The graph illustrates the relationship between the purity of a drug and the percentage of adulterant. As the percentage of adulterant increases, the purity (percentage of drug) decreases linearly.
Fentanyl

• Here? Not sure.
• Huge issue midwest/east coast.
Levamisole

- 91% of cocaine samples tested locally were (2011-12) positive for levamisole.
- Use seems to have fallen off since then.
- Potentially deadly.
Wound botulism

- Continues to be an issue for local heroin injectors.
- Alerts from PHSKC.
- Potentially deadly very rapidly.
- Swift care is imperative.
Harm Reduction

• Grew out of efforts to prevent HIV among injection drug users.
• First use of term began 27 years ago.
• Not a theory so much as philosophy/attitude.
• Although much HR practice is firmly theory based.
HR cont’d.

• Really based on common sense.
• And evidence.
• The NADR interviews.
• HR in practice.
• Huffing.
HR cont’d.

- Drug tx: methadone, buprenorphine.
- Syringe exchange.
- Safe injection sites.
- NAOMI.
- Legalization?
• The Netherlands and smoking heroin
• Narcan/naloxone (WA good Samaritan bill)